

Praise follows traveller fight

RESIDENTS who manned barricades and saw the departure of travellers from land in Epping five days after they moved on to land off Flux's Lane have been praised by district council leader John Knapman.

The residents sprang into action after two families moved on to land between the Coopersale Hall School site and Gardener's Farm.

Mr Knapman said: "Fortunately an amicable solution was found between the residents and the family of travellers who were on the site whereby the travellers agreed to leave."

He added: "I applaud the ability of the residents to reach such a satisfactory conclusion."

It had appeared the travellers had purchased the land which they were occupying and at the time residents said they planned to pool funds to buy the land and create a community resource.

Mr Knapman now wants to see the Government make changes to the law.

He said: "What this incident shows is that early action by residents certainly seems to have been effective and this was fairly quickly followed up by the council obtaining an injunction against any further travellers moving on to the site.

"What is absolutely clear is that current legislation provides the police and council with next to no authority to deal with situations where travellers have purchased the site on to which they are looking to move. This has to be addressed, and quickly."

5:36am Saturday 31st July 2004

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